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December 22, 1989 Romania: Situation Report

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Summary:

An analysis of the deterioration of Ceausescu's regime in Romania and its effects on stability.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

- Scan of Original Document

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~~Top Secret~~

6.2(d)

6.2(d)

ROMANIA: Situation Report

Protests Spreading

The Ceausescu regime is fast approaching its breaking point, and the US Embassy has ordered evacuation of nonessential personnel. [redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

A staged proregime rally in Bucharest yesterday turned into a violent anti-Ceausescu demonstration of about 20,000 people; it left at least 13 confirmed dead. [redacted] 5,000 protesters at the International Hotel were assaulted by security forces around midnight. [redacted] several pockets of unrest in other parts of Bucharest. [redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1)

6.2(d)

[redacted] government forces also fired on demonstrators in Arad and Cluj yesterday. [redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

3.3(b)(1)

6.2(d)

Despite the state of emergency declared in the Timisoara area, an unprecedented number of demonstrators—reportedly up to 100,000—demanded the right to bury their dead. [redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

[redacted] intellectuals and professionals in Timisoara have formed the Committee for Socialist Democracy, which has called for the ouster of the entire government. Premier Dascalescu reportedly went to Timiscara to meet with a delegation from the group. [redacted]

6.2(d)

Reliability of Security Forces

[redacted] some Army troops in Timisoara have joined protesters, and [redacted] unarmed militia are handing out bread to civilians. [redacted] executions of military personnel by security forces for disobeying orders to shoot at demonstrators. [redacted]

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Comment: It is unlikely security forces will be able to sustain the current level of force for more than a few days. The regime, however, will continue to rely primarily on the security forces, rather than on the military, to put down unrest. The widely hated "securitate" is better equipped and has a personal stake in the survival of the regime. The regular Army is comprised largely of conscripts who probably would balk if called on for prolonged use of force against fellow Romanians. [redacted]

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[Redacted]

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Romania: Forces To Quell Unrest

The Ministry of Interior has employed the Security Troops and the militia to carry out the suppression of the people of Romania. [Redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

- The 20,000 men of the Security Troops are well trained and fully equipped for riot control. They are stationed throughout the country to protect VIPs and key industries. Their equipment includes armored personnel carriers and helicopters.
- The militia numbers some 23,000 men performing day-to-day law enforcement and crowd control. They have a well-deserved reputation for brutality.
- The Romanian People's Army, with some 128,000 men, could be used as a backup force but is not adequately trained for internal security operations. Some soldiers reportedly have joined the demonstrations.
- The unarmed Patriotic Guard—12,000 men—performs simple security checks. [Redacted]
- The Border Guards' 20,000-man conscript force protects the country by controlling all movement in and around the border area.

3.3(b)(1)

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[Redacted]

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Foreign Reaction

Soviet Politburo member Zaykov yesterday urged the leadership not to use force but to open a dialogue with its people. The Soviet CSCE representative called on Romania to observe the Helsinki accords but stopped short of condemning the regime. Hungary has asked the chairman of the UN Security Council to convene a meeting to discuss the situation. It also has canceled its Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation with Bucharest. Foreign Minister Horn announced, however, that Budapest will not break diplomatic relations with Romania. [redacted]

6.2(d)

Comment: Hungary is focusing its current efforts on orchestrating international condemnation of the Ceausescu regime, which it believes is its best hope to influence events. Budapest is not likely to take any offensive military steps, although it will closely monitor Romanian troop movements. Pressure for stronger measures will mount, however, if violence becomes more widespread, and Budapest may eventually be forced to sever relations. [redacted]

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West European leaders have responded to the escalating violence with diplomatic protests. At yesterday's CSCE meeting, 23 members condemned the repression. The EC has suspended all remaining relations with Bucharest and offered to provide humanitarian aid to Romanian refugees. [redacted]

6.2(d)

Next Moves

[redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

6.2(d)

Comment: Although Ceausescu may try to dampen unrest by offering further economic concessions, his preference will be to use force to retain power. The government already has offered minimal increases in wages and allowances, and stores are reportedly being stocked with usually scarce goods. These concessions will probably incite further popular outrage. [redacted]

6.2(d)

After Ceausescu, Who?

Continuing unrest—particularly in Bucharest—probably would set in motion efforts by the military or Communist Party leadership to topple Ceausescu. There are a few identifiable political figures in Romania who could pick up the pieces if Ceausescu were ousted. Possible successors include military figures such as Defense Minister Vasile Milea or civilians such as international affairs secretary Constantin Olteanu, former Ceausescu adviser Ion Iliescu, and former Foreign Minister Stefan Andrei. [redacted]

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